YOUTH'S MISCELLANY.

THE GREAT FIRE IN LONDON AND THE NONCONFORMIST MINISTERS.

Before this year closes we wish to remind our young friends of the remarkable event which transpired two hundred years ago, when about two thousand ministers were suddenly and cruelly ejected from the Church of England.

Three years afterwards, the Great Plague broke out in London, when many of these noble-minded men ventured among the infected and the dying, of which we have already given you some information at page 331.

One year after this, the Great Fire in London broke out, in September, 1666, when we again find these devoted ministers among scenes of peril and suffering.

Richard Baxter says:—"On Sept. 2, after midnight, London was set on fire; and on Sept. 3, the Exchange was burnt; and in three days almost all the city within the walls, and much without them. The season had been exceeding dry before, and the wind had been in the east, where the fire began. The people, having none to conduct them aright, could do nothing to resist it, but stand and see their houses burnt without remedy; the engines being presently out of order and useless. The streets were crowded with people and carts, to carry away what goods they could get out; and they that were the most active and befriended (by their wealth) got carts and saved much, and the rest lost almost all. The loss in houses and goods is scarcely to be valued; and among the rest the loss of books was an exceeding great detriment to the interests of piety and learning. Almost all the booksellers in St. Paul's Churchyard brought their books into vaults under St. Paul's Church, where it was thought almost impossible that fire should come. But the church itself being on fire, the exceeding weight of the houses falling down did break into the vault and let in the fire, and they could not come near to save the books. The library also of Sion College was burnt, and most of the libraries of ministers, conformable and nonconformable, in the city, with the libraries of many Nonconformists of the country, which had been lately brought up to the city. I saw the half-burnt leaves of books near my dwelling at Acton, six miles from London, but others found them near Windsor, almost twenty miles distant. At last, some seamen taught them to blow up some of the next houses with gunpowder, which stopt the fire; and in some places it stopt as wonderfully as it had proceeded, without known cause."

Pepys, speaking of this tremendous conflagration, says:—"I went this morning on foot from Whitehall as far as London Bridge, through the late Fleet Street, Ludgate Hill, by St. Paul's, Cheapside, Exchange, Bishopsgate, Aldersgate, and out to Moorfields, thence through Cornhill, and with extraordinary difficulty, clambering over heaps of yet smoking rubbish, and mistaking where I was. The ground under my feet was so hot that it even burnt the soles of my shoes. The people who walked about the ruins appeared like men in some dismal desert, or rather in some great city wasted by a cruel enemy; to which was added the stench that came from some poor creatures' bodies, beds, and other combustible goods. Nor was I yet able to pass through any of the narrow streets, but kept the widest; the ground and air, smoke, and fiery vapour continued so intense, that my hair was almost singed, and my feet insufferably surbated (bruised). The by-lanes and narrow streets were quite filled up with rubbish, nor could any one have possibly known where he was but by the ruins of some church or hall that had some remarkable tower or pinnacle remaining. I then went towards Islington and Highgate, where one might have seen two hundred thousand people, of all ranks and degrees, dispersed and lying along by their heaps of what they could save from the fire, deploring their loss, and though ready to perish for hunger and destitution, yet not asking one penny for relief, which appeared a stranger sight than any I had yet beheld."

It was in the midst of this mass of afflicted people that the Nonconformist ministers went with the light and consolation of the Gospel; their own sufferings prepared them to sympathise with the miseries of others, as the support they derived themselves from the truth impelled them to make it known to the homeless and the wretched. In anticipation of winter, they began to prepare half-timbered meeting-houses, like that in Deadman's Place, on the site of the cooperage in the

Park Street brewery, or the well known Zoar Chapel, Gravel Lane, Southwark, where JOHN BUNYAN preached.

"The churches being burnt," says Baxter, "and the parish ministers gone (for want of places and maintenance), *the Nonconformists were now more resolute than ever to preach till they were imprisoned.* Dr. Manton had his rooms full in Covent Garden; Mr. Thomas Vincent, Mr. Thomas Doolittle, Dr. Samuel Annesly (the father of John Wesley's mother), Mr. Wadsworth, Mr. Janeway at Rotherhithe, Mr. Chester, Mr. Franklin, did keep their meetings very openly, and prepared large rooms, and some of them plain chapels, with pulpits, seats, and galleries for the reception of as many as could come."

HYMN TO THE COMFORTER.

BY KING ROBERT THE DEVOUT OF FRANCE, (1026.)

COME, Thou Holy Spirit! come;
And from Thine eternal home
Shed the ray of light divine:
Come, Thou Father of the poor!
Come, Thou Source of all our store!
Come, within our bosom shine.

Thou, of comforters the best!
Thou, the soul's most welcome guest!
Sweet Refreshment here below!
In our labour Rest most sweet;
Grateful Shadow from the heat;
Solace in the midst of woe!

O most blessed Light Divine!
Shine within these hearts of Thine,
And our inmost being fill.

If Thou take Thy grace away,
Nothing pure in man will stay,
All our good is turn'd to ill.

Heal our wounds; our strength renew;
On our dryness pour Thy dew;
Wash the stains of guilt away:
Bend the stubborn heart and will,
Melt the frozen, warm the chill,
Guide the steps that go astray.

On the faithful, who adore
And confess Thee, evermore
In Thy sevenfold gifts descend;
Give them virtue's sure reward;
Give them Thy salvation, Lord!
Give them joys that never end. Amen.

LOVE IN CHASTISEMENT.

OH! Saviour, whose mercy severe in its kindness,
Has chasten'd my wanderings, and guided my way;
Adored be the power which illumined my blindness,
And weaned me from phantoms that smiled to betray.

Enchanted by all that was dazzling and fair,
I followed the rainbow, I caught at the toy,
And still in displeasure thy goodness was there,
Disappointing the hope, and defeating the joy.

The blossoms blushed bright, but a worm was below;
The moon-light shone fair, there was blight in the beam;
Sweet whisper'd the breeze, but it whisper'd of woe;
And bitterness flowed in the soft-flowing stream.

So, cured of my folly, yet cured but in part,
I turned to the refuge thy pity displayed;
And still did this eager and credulous heart
Weave visions of promise that bloomed but to fade.

I thought that the course of the pilgrim to heaven
Would be bright as the sunbeam, and glad as the morn;
Thou show'dst me the path, it was dark and uneven,
All rugged with rock, and all tangled with thorn.

I dreamed of celestial rewards and renown;
I grasped at the triumph which blesses the brave;
I asked for the palm branch, the robe and the crown—
I asked, and thou show'dst me a cross and a grave.

Subdued, and instructed at length to thy will,
My hopes and my longings I fain would resign;
Oh! give me the heart that can wait and be still,
Nor know of a wish or a pleasure but thine.

SIR ROBERT GRANT.

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